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Human Services brings focus to children's mental health issues

'Fidgety Fairy Tales' performance highlights Children's Mental Health Awareness Day

ST. PAUL – The Minnesota Department of Human Services today hosted a musical performance to recognize National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day. "Fidgety Fairy Tales, The Mental Health Musical," was performed in the lobby of the Elmer L. Andersen Human Services Building in downtown St. Paul for students from a nearby school.

"We need to reach children who are experiencing mental health challenges early so they can get the support they need to grow into resilient and healthy adults," said Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson. "Programs like Fidgety Fair Tales are a great way to help both children learn about mental health issues they or a friend could face."

A program of the Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health, the [Fidgety Fairy Tales](#) series reimagines familiar fairy tales to show positive portrayals of children with mental health disorders and provide accurate and accessible information about mental health. The original musical included three tales – "Bluebeard" on the negative effects of stigma, "Robin Hood and his Band of Anxious Men" on strategies for managing anxiety, and "The Myth of Demeter and Persephone" on coping with grief and loss – and featured a diverse cast of young actors ages 8 to 18, both with and without lived mental health experience.

Nationwide, an estimated 1 in every 5 children experience a mental disorder each year. In Minnesota, 9 percent of school-age children and 5 percent of preschool-age children have a serious emotional disturbance, which are long-lasting mental health problems that interfere significantly with the child's home and school life.

Ensuring children receive the right mental health help at the right time is a focus for the state. The governor's two-year budget recommends investing more than \$39 million to provide a comprehensive range of mental health care services for children and adults. The proposal builds on Gov. Mark Dayton and the Legislature's work in 2013 to double funding for school-linked mental health services and increase funding for crisis response services, bringing mental health care to where children live and learn.

More information about the [governor's budget proposal for children's mental health](#) is available on the DHS website.